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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2461

May 18, 1990

FOREIGN-OWNED LAND -- Slightly less than 1 percent of U.S. agricultural land -- or 12.9 million acres -- was owned by foreign interests as of Dec. 31, 1989, says John Lee, administrator of USDA's Economic Research Service. The new total is 263,273 acres more than a year earlier. About 60 percent of the reported foreign holdings is actually land owned by U.S. firms, Lee said. The rest of the foreign-held land is owned by investors not affiliated with U.S. firms. Contact: J. Peter Debraal (202) 786-1425.

RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS VISIT USDA LABS -- Two scientists from one of Russia's top ag institutes are touring seven USDA labs nationwide to learn how plant germplasm facilities in the U.S. are managed. The Soviet scientists want to establish a computer-linked database between Russian & American germplasm collections, says Henry L. Shands, national program leader for plant germplasm for USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Contact: Julie Corliss (415) 559-6069.

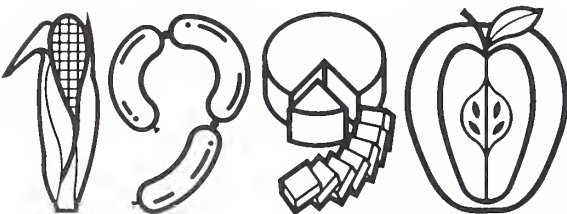
FARM WAGES AVERAGED \$5.54 for April, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. During the week of April 8 - 14, 2.96 million people worked on the Nation's farms & ranches. The work force was comprised of 1.50 million self-employed farm operators, 427,000 unpaid workers and 833,000 workers hired directly by farm operators. Rounding out the total were 203,000 ag service employees doing work on farms & ranches during the survey week. Contact: John Buche (202) 447-5446.

FARM PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY -- "There are some folks in Washington who say that we're proposing too much flexibility and that farmers are not ready for that much ... that they need more wisdom and guidance from Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to bear on their decision-making," says Sec. Clayton Yeutter. "I disagree." Yeutter says the flexibility issue is "a question of whether we fear market signals." Yeutter says, "I don't, and I have a lot of confidence in the farmers' ability to make their own decisions." Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.

SECRETARY'S REPORT -- Sec. Clayton Yeutter's Annual Report is now available. It summarizes accomplishments of USDA during 1989 and gives an over-all view of what USDA is doing. For a copy of "Report of the Secretary of Agriculture 1989," call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

NATURAL RESOURCE TRENDS -- Demands for most renewable natural resources are expected to increase in the future faster than supplies, according to a new report recently released by USDA. The assessment, which is prepared every ten years covers private, state & federal lands and projects the demand for & supply of renewable resources over the next 50 years. "Our renewable resources are the building blocks for the quality of life in America," says Dale Robertson, chief of USDA's Forest Service. "Adequate attention to these resources will ensure that we maintain and improve the productivity and environmental quality of our resource base." Contact: Judy Kissinger (202) 447-2494.

AIRBORNE CANDID CAMERAS -- A new type of video programming -- taken from planes at 3,000 to 12,500 feet -- can reveal outbreaks of weeds, insects and plant diseases. "In a year or so, agricultural consultants in the U.S. may offer farmers these videos," says James H. Everitt of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. "That will allow them to act more quickly to protect crops and livestock and to make better use of fertilizers and pesticides." Contact: Jim De Quattro (301) 344-4296.



JOURNALISTS' CONFERENCE

FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION UPDATE

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Drug Administration

RECOGNIZE THIS LOGO? Once again this year, USDA and the Food & Drug Administration are sponsoring a Journalists' Conference. This year's conference will be June 25 & 26 at the National Press Club, National Press Building in Washington, D.C. Topics to be covered include: controlling pesticide residues in food; latest food consumption & consumer studies; foodborne illness; food labeling; new food technologies, international food safety issues. For more info & a brochure & registration form, call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1719 -- On this edition of Agriculture USA, Brenda Curtis talks with Texas A&M University Extension Horticulturist Doug Welsh about a new landscape technique called xeriscaping. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1201 -- Tanning salon warning; avoiding fat & cholesterol; sun protection; 4-H youth & environmental issues; household inventory. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1708 -- USDA News Highlights; 1990/91 export outlook; major kiwifruit producers compete; alfalfa research; a new weapon against horn flies. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1320 -- Bigger bang from Bt; just what is Bt; germ plasma pay-off, cooler cotton; internal insect control. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., May 21, wheat outlook, U.S. trade update, catfish; Tues., May 22, crop/weather update; Wed., May 23, ag income & finance outlook, poultry production; Thurs., May 24, food outlook; Fri., May 25, livestock update, world sugar situation; Wed., May 30, export outlook, crop/weather update; Tues., May 31, cotton/wool, ag prices, world tobacco situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(May 17, 19 & 21)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on the ARS National Visitor Center; Deboria Janifer describes how to cut the fat in your diet; Chris Larson takes a look at conservation education for science teachers.

ACTUALITIES -- Norton Strommen on the latest weather & crop update; James Donald on the crop production estimates; Joe O'Mara on current GATT trade negotiations; and Jim Schaub on oilseeds.

NEXT WEEK -- Pat O'Leary reports on GATT & agriculture.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFFMIKE

FAX IT TO US! We have a new fax machine sitting in the office with Florence Kelly & Mocile Trotter. So, now we can fax to you & vice-versa. FAX number is: (202) 245-5165. We'll be waiting for your fax ...

THANKS for being so prompt about returning our survey forms asking about a weekly mailed video tape feature service from USDA. We're gratified by your response. If you didn't get a survey form or haven't sent yours back yet, give Marci Hilt a call on (202) 447-6445.

USDA RADIO'S Gary Crawford is a finalist in the prestigious International New York Radio Festival competition for his "Secret Life of Vegetables," an Ag USA. Gary will attend the awards ceremony in New York, June 13, where he'll learn what, if any, award he won. Congratulations, Gary!

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SPRING has produced a variety of hot & cold; calm & windy in N.E. Nebraska with scattered areas of light rainfall in an area of short moisture conditions, says Gary D. "Shep" Scheopf (farm director, WJAG/KEXL, Norfolk, Neb.). Soil temperatures averaged 58 degrees over the past week at planting depths. Topsoil moisture rated 52 percent adequate with corn planting 25 to 30 percent complete over the state. Record livestock cash markets have kept hog & cattle producers optimistic for the 1990 marketing year. "Shep" reports from the Norfolk, Omaha & Sioux City Neb., marketing areas.

IF THIS COLUMN looks different, it's because our Chief Vic Powell is still recovering from medical treatment for kidney stones. We miss him and wish him a speedy recovery.

Marci Hilt
Director, Media Liaison